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ABSTRACT

The study examined attitudes of special education teachers who visited the 1983 Very Special Arts Festival (VSAF) held in Anchorage, Alaska. A review of the literature addresses contributions of arts experiences to the total development of handicapped students. The history and goals of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped (NCAH) are outlined. Forty-two teachers completed questionnaires on their attitudes toward the VSAF, classroom implications, and attitudes toward the ideals and philosophy of the NCAH. Findings suggested that the teachers would like guidance in developing arts activities with their students, such as workshops with artists and courses for credit in arts and the handicapped. Teachers were in definite agreement with the general philosophies behind NCAH. (CL)

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THE 'RAINBOW FACTORY'- ARTS AND THE HANDICAPPED.

A study of the attitudes of special education teachers in Anchorage towards the 1983 VSAF, the 'Rainbow Factory' and the philosophy behind the NCAH, with a descriptive overview of the development in arts for the handicapped child.

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Introduction.

In June 1974, the Joseph P. Kennedy Jnr. Foundation provided funding for a National Conference on Arts for the Mentally Retarded. Out of this developed a national interest in the concept of integrating arts into the education of mentally retarded students. After several conferences, the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped (NCAH) was organized to co-ordinate the development of a nationwide program of arts for disabled children and youth, which since 1980 has also expended to include all ages of disabled persons.

The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped is composed of leaders from major arts organizations, agencies representing handicapped citizens, private foundations and educators. With funding from the Federal government and the private sector, the NCAH serves as an educational affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the development and implementation of year-round arts programming for persons with diabilities.

The Very special Arts Festival (VSAF) Program, stems from the NCAH's nationwide program of arts for the disabled. It is designed to provide a noncompetitive forum for disabled and nondisabled children and youth to enjoy and share their achievements in the visual and performing arts with interested audiences. The VSAF serves as a catalyst for ongoing programs integrating the arts into the general education of disabled children and youth throughout the United States. The main purpose is to show the impact of arts in developing artistic responsiveness and increasing general learning achievements among handicapped students, as well as to provide integration into the mainstream of education and cultural activity.

Visual and performance artists who provide workshops and activities for the handicapped for the purpose of developing their creativity and general

learning achievements, are in existance in and outside the United States of America. There are several agencies including one called 'Shape', in England, (Neumark 1981), which provide similar opportunities for the handicapped.

In 1978, the Anchorage Arts Council, in co-operation with the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped and the Municipality of Anchorage Handicapped Unit, organized their first Very Special Arts Festival called 'The Rainbow Factory', in Anchorage, Alaska. The Festival has since been an annual event. In 1983 , the 'Rainbow Factory', also travelled to Fairbanks, Juneau and Kenai, with exhibits and artists to set up the Festival at these sites.

The Very Special Arts Festival; the 'Rainbow Factory' in Alaska is providing a very valuable forum for visual and performance arts experiences for the handicapped. However, it is not known if the teachers who take groups to these festivals consider them purely as valuable isolated events or if they find that they provide insight into experiences which could be implemented as activities in their own school environment.

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the special education teachers who visited the 1983 'Rainbow Factory' VSAF in Anchorage towards the arts activities presented at the Festival, how they considered them in terms of value as ongoing activities for their students and to get some indication of their feelings towards the general aims and principles behind the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped.

In this report the following abbreviations may be used : NCAH, which stands for the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped; VSAF, which stands for the Very Special Arts Festival, a nationwide program of arts for handicapped persons; and AIE, which stands for Artists in Education, a program of the National Endowments of the Arts.

Information for this study was gathered from special education teachers who visited the 'Rainbow Factory' in March 1983. One limitation of this might have been that the teachers' recall of the significance of specific events may have been reduced because of the time that had elapsed since the Festival. However, for those who had positive impressions of the activities and those who have used activities in follow up work with their students, this should have been less of a problem.

Review of the Related Literature.

Federal legislation with public law 94-142 mandates the placement of pupils with special needs in regular education where possible,to provide the least restrictive environment for their education.

One of the areas in which 'regular' placement often occurs, is in the arts. Included in the 'arts' are visual art, music, drama and dance/movement, (Anderson, 1979). PL 94-142 also states that inservice preparation of education personnel working with handicapped children, should also be an ongoing function.

The lack of knowledge of most art teachers in the area of special education was addressed by Cohn, Blum, Dobbs, and Vichi (1979). Few teachers at that time, they claimed,were prepared to work effectively with the handicapped children that were in their classes as a result of mainstreaming. A lack of comprehension of terminology also caused a communication barrier between art teachers and classroon teachers, all of which caused a less than satisfactory mainstreaming situation for handicapped children.

"Operating with confidence when dealing with the wide range of handicaps, mental and physical is a rare trait among art teachers" (Gister, 1981, P.24). As an art teacher with handicapped children in the mid seventies, Gister found a lack of experienced people in the field and therefore, guidance. She expresses that special education teachers are a valuable resource for art teachers. The need for this collaboration is also sited by Cohn et al. (1979) and Anderson (1979).

An Illinois State University project (Anderson 1979), carried out between May 1978 and July 1979, was held to facilitate communication between special education and art teachers, in order to achieve effective and more motivating art

programs for the handicapped. There were six goals to the project: to facilitate communication between artists and special education teachers; to familiarize participants with educational methods necessary for effective art situations; to increase first hand knowledge of art activities most appropriate for primary and intermediate learners with a variety of handicaps; to emphasize the importance of art as a learning facilitator; and to develop a model for use in all other areas of the arts, besides the visual arts. The project was only funded for the first of three years, so the latter section was not completed.

A needs assessment was made at the four sites where the project was to be carried out, which clearly supported the appropriateness of the workshop. Participants reported the extent to which they were able to use the information and activities presented in the workshops. Feedback on the organization of the workshops was also gathered. An outline for the course 'Art for the Handicapped' has been approved for implimentation as a one credit course at Illinois State University College of Continuing Education and Public Services. The report on the project has also been presented at major national conferences concerning arts and the handicapped.

Art programs which involve special education in a mainstreaming situation are very important, but of course not the only time when art teachers are dealing with children who have special needs. Art is still taught in self-contained classrooms as well as other institutions for handicapped children and youth.

Attitudes towards the importance of art as a part of education has been changing since more research has been done in the field. Art could no longer be considered as just a 'frill' in education by advocates, but as providing opportunity for handicapped children to understand and experience what they

cannot acquire through other modes of thought. Yet, according to Cohn, et al. (1979), art was still lacking in special education. Goebel and Gowland (1982) noted a lack of awareness in the field of arts for remediating the aims of special education teachers' for their students.

The Frostig Developmental Program of Visual Perception has been widely used to train the visual perception maturity needed for reading as measured by the Developmental Test of Visual Perception, (DTVP). In 1977, Nancy Wood conducted a study to see if visual perception training and art could be integrated together into an effective reading program, on the assumption that both strive to increase visual awareness and stress discrimination of detail and position in space.

Eight children, of which seven were tested as having possible visual perceptual disibilities, were used in the experiment. The children were pretested on the Frostig DTVP as well as in the math. and reading subtests on the Wide Range Achievement Test, Peabody Picture Test and the Draw-a-Person Test. They received an eight week program which consisted of activities designed to remediate the subtests of the DTVP. The posttest scores showed significant increase compared to the pretests' scores.The study suggests that art has a potential to improve motor ability and therefore reading. Also the visual perceptual abilities which the DTVP tests and the DPVP train are involved in the reading process and therefore transfer to academics. The added plus of the art program is that it can provide a constant reinforcement and therefore motivation as well as increasing visual motor ability. It also encourages the development of a strong self image and divergent thinking.

Wood suggests that art activities should be supplementary to a strong

remedial program in reading, which may be best used by art teachers who wish to design a program with some remedial benefits.

In a paper presented to the Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Piagetian Theory, Silver and Levin (1979) discussed theories of language development in relation to thought. They suggested that thought develops independent of language, which follows it. In the normal child language pinpoints experiences and in labelling them makes them reusable. Language also allows the exchange of experience.

Three studies were made (Silver and Lavin,1979) which produced evidence that imagery may serve to bypass weaknesses and capitalize on visual strenghths. An art program was designed in which procedures dealt with conceptual, sequential and spatial skills, which were presented in activities of: drawing from the imagination; drawing from observation and predictive drawing, painting and clay modelling. The procedures were designed to stimulate abstract thinking and reasoning and to develop readiness for mathematics and language, based on the hypothesis that children who are deficient in linguistic processing may be able to use spatial processing to solve problems and develop concepts.

The first study involved language and hearing impaired children, the second was made with eleven children who showed visual motor weakness and the third was with children identified as having special educational needs. In all the studies significant gains were made in all three areas of cognition. Due to a certain concern that art activities presented in this way suffer in aesthetic quality, an independent panel of artists, who devised their own test of quality, were asked to judge the aesthetic quality of the work and found it to improve after the posttests. The area of research into developing and evaluating the cognitive skills of handicapped children yielded encouraging results.

A study was made to investigate the effects of a visual arts program on the body image of children with learning disabilities (De Chiara 1982). Body image is the picture of our body that we form in our minds, and body awareness occurs through receiving information from sensations, kinaesthetic data and motor activity. It is accepted that body image has a pervasive influence on life experiences and serves as a point of reference around which children orientate themselves. There are different thoeries concerning the importance of body image: that it is crucial to cognitive development, learning to read and number concept; in psychological differentiation; and significant in spatial awareness within the environment.

In Chiara's study, 20 children from self contained L.D. classes were matched according to IQ, age and pretest scores of posture tests. Four measures of body image were used: Human Figure Drawing Test; Manikin Assembly Kit; the Imitation of Postures Tast; and a task involving indentification of body parts in response to verbal instruction. An art program which consisted of three phases was given to the experimental group. The program involved two and three dimensional activities concerned with body schema, body image and the body in space. The results of the study showed that there were significant gains in the all posttests except the Manikin Assembly Task.

The previous studies have all presented art activities as being significant in assisting many aspects of child's development, including educational development. Perhaps,by adding this new dimension a more wholistic approach to education may be obtained. These approaches may be good for both handicapped and nonhandicapped children, but are particularly important for handicapped children who do not respond well to regular educational methods or modes of learning.

Geobel and Gowland (1982) claim that there is little effort made to

train teachers in the arts or to develop special art programs for children with handicaps. This may be due to teachers being unaware of the relevance of the visual arts as a remedial tool, as well as a lack of confidence, training and administrative leadership. Russell and Russell (1982) identify the concern and frustration of art teachers when dealing with mildly mentally retarded children, who are the most commonly 'mainstreamed'. But they see this concern as evidence of the teachers accepting the challenge. They recommend that with training and knowledge of the characteristics and needs of handicapped children, art teachers should be able to advise on what prescriptive experiences can be effective through art,in bringing about changes in various aspects of personal adjustment, learning skills or other behavioral change in fulfillment of a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives. Therefore,art teachers should share input at IEP conferences of students when apparent remedial needs can be met through an art program.

The question, how can art become an integral part of the special education program, is tackled by Cohn, et al. (1979). They suggest certain administrative practices,which need not cost money, could be implimented by principals, special education administrators and art supervisors, who should work cooperatively in planning provision of art to exceptional children within their school district. Staffing patterns can be changed gradually by assessing present competencies and then adding the needed competencies as positions become available. Enquiring after additional funding for specially qualified art teachers in their schools who could provide special programs. Provision for inservice training can be made and university courses, as well as incentives for art teachers to increase their knowledge in the handicapped. The designation of a special fine arts team to provide consultation and demonstration to special education and art teachers. Teachers from several

districts should be encouraged to join together to participate in these activities.

If art programs in special education are to be funded, art therapists, specialists and administrators must work with the government so that they may gain positions on government committees. Greater understanding of state and federal programs is required, plus information on individual existing programs that can provide information for funding agencies.

The National Arts and Handicapped Information Service provides free information on government proceedings and facilities for educational, social and cultural services for the handicapped.

The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped formed in 1974, sponsors the Very Special Arts Festival as one of it's projects. The major purpose of this Arts in Service Project is to demonstrate the impact of the arts in developing artistic responsiveness and increasing general learning achievement among handicapped students. Another Arts in Service Project of the NCAH initiates workshops and conferences to identify leaders at the State level who can effect change in the education of the handicapped.

A study was made in the Niagera Falls School District by Margaret (1970), in response to special education teachers need for an art program which they felt was beyond them as well as the art speciatists' feeling of inadequacey in teaching MR* children. Under the Elementary and Secondary School Act a study was innovated to determine what other schools in West New York State were doing and to observe different approaches in the Niagera Falls area. A cross-section of MR classes were chosen from urban and suburban situations for the study. It became apparent that other schools were recognizing the same problems. The school system in Rochester was showing most progress, with six action centers and it's own art program, but other areas were only

*Mentally retarded.

just beginning to make a start in this field.

Projects were introduced by Margaret into the classes, which included three-dimensional experiences, to create art objects. Prior to ten years before this project little had been done to educate the trainable child (IQ less than 50). This project reaped positive results; with previously little opportunity to achieve academically these children showed pleasure and achievement in their art activities and consequently showed more motivation in their other academic subjects.

Exchange of ideas was encouraged between schools and many new ideas were obtained including projects devised for regular classes being adapted for special education classes. Margaret's recommendations were; more exchange between art teachers, art lessons every week for Junior High students of at least 45 mins. duration and a maximum class size of 18 students, and at least two 45 minute lessons at High School level with a maximum of 15 students. The importance of learning about life experiences for retarded children was stressed and a unit on archetecture and interior design was strongly recommended for Jnr. and Snr. High students.

A program called Reading Improvement Through Art, (R.I.T.A.) was launched by Corwin in 1975, with the support of Robert Real's Division of Humanities and Arts Education, and Jane Algozzine, Chief Bureau of Reading, New york State Department of Education, in an effort to adapt methodology proven successful with poor readers in elementary, intermediate and high schools. A pilot project was implemented, using classes of 25 students from nine different secondary schools in New York.The students were all reading at least two grades below level. Title III funded reading specialists visited each class at least once a week. Art specialists attended curriculum writing workshops voluntarily. After a year a Curriculum Guide delineating the

R.I.T.A. concept was published , with information on how to fund and implement the program.

The R.I.T.A. project was evaluated twice during the year of the pilot project. The students were pretested and an expected level of improvement was estimated. The posttest scores of students at both evaluation times showed significant improvement in reading comprehension, beyond their expected levels of achievement.

There is question as to which aspects of interdisciplinary programs cause learning improvements: perceptual training; individual attention; internal motivation; or emotional satisfaction. Corwin,recommends further research will help the full potential of such programs. However, since students need immediate help, he urges the use of interdisciplinary programs like R.I.T.A., that are producing positive results, in the meantime.

Heller (1983),describes a project which was used as a mainstreaming experience in a Los Angeles school. Two artists worked with special and regular education students and teachers on this project. The artists were members of a group called "Interaction" who bring visual and performing arts to communities of the world. In this project their activity, "Concrete Sculpture in the Community", was a great educational and mainstreaming success. Students designed, planned, organized, built and decorated a piece of functional sculpture for their own playground. Special and regular education teachers got to know each other and students learned about handicapping conditions and discovered each other's strengths and limitations. Similarly, one of the main purposes of the NCAH's Very Special Arts Festival is to provide a forum where handicapped students can demonstrate their creativity and show that they are more like normal children than different; being creative and productive people if given the opportunity.

It is becoming more and more commonly accepted by artists and special educators that there are many benefits for the handicapped through art experiences. In an effort to demonstrate their own views that the visual arts can be a potential instrument in assisting special education teachers to reach their goals with students, Goebel and Gowland (1982) devised a visual arts program. Their primary interest was to address the five general aims of special education teachers , which after information gathering, were identified as being most consistently indicated. These were as follows: developing a positive self concept; acquiring better organizational skills; increasing listening skills; increasing the ability to follow a sequence of directions and overcoming or coping with individual deficits.The art program was developed to embrace some of the traditional aims of art education which would lead towards the five general educational aims identified. Flexibility was necessary to allow teachers to improve individual deficits of students. Brief clear instructions were provided with demonstrations suggestions selecting activities that provided ample opportunity for independent accomplishment.

A pilot project was held for a year with thirteen learning disabled and behavior adjustment students and two special education teachers. Children were given praise for positive behavior and accomplishment. Students' progress was recorded in a manner that included the special education aims for individual children. The students progressed in terms of their teacher's overall aims. The author recommended that the art lessons remained self-contained, so as not to provide any opportunity for self doubt if students were less able than their nonhandicapped peers.

The National Committee Arts for the Handicapped is a national co-ordinating body for arts programming for disabled persons. It was formed

as an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1974 and has played a major role in developing and supporting arts programs by and with disabled people throughout the United States. The Committee has been working with arts councils and State Departments of Education in each state.

Fowler (1979) reports that Congress authorized the U.S. Commissioner of Education under the Special Projects provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, to carry out a program through the NCAH for the purpose of identifying , developing and implementing arts for the handicapped person and for this purpose appropriated $1 million . The NCAH also receives additional funds from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

Fowler (1979) also reports that the NCAH was completing a three year research project to develop a curriculum for the handicapped that is designed to use the arts in the teaching of basic skills. During the first year of the project teachers in five elementary schools in the Clover Park School District of Tacoma, Washington, collected student data and assembled lesson plans. The curriculum, called Arts for Learning Guides was developed to show teachers how to infuse the arts into an established curriculum for handicapped children. This Guide was to be field tested in thirteen sites, teachers' responses were to be collected and the Guide revised accordingly.

In recognizing the importance of research in the field of arts and the handicapped, the NCAH requested Dr. Frances Anderson to make a review of published research literature to reflect the key activities of those working in this area of education research. Such an overview was also intended to increase efficiency and relevancy when planning for program accountability and in obtaining government support at a time when justification for the arts must rely on more than just subjective talk and philosophy.

The review was originally intended to cover research literature from 1978 to 1981, but because few studies were published at that time the period was extended to cover the decade 1971 to 1981. The search included visual arts, drama, music, dance/movement as well as the major handicaping conditions: mental retardation; hearing, speach and visual impairment, emotional or behavioral disturbances, physical and learning disibilities. Only studies carried out with structured enquiry and scientific methodology were included. The extensive search found 33 studies involving music, 18 the visual arts, 3 in dance/movement and one in dance/drama. The document was published in 1982 with the intention of gradually adding other pertinent literature. The review reflected gaps in certain areas, indicating where there was further need for research.

One of the NCAH's major efforts is the Very Special Arts Festival program. This program has grown from it's first festival in 1975,to include more than 330 in 1983. The NCAH served more than 400,000 disabled individuals in 1983 in 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The programs are intended to provide an opportunity for the handicapped to take part in visual and performing arts workshops in schools and communities, giving them the chance to demonstrate their ability while at the same time being mainstreamed into society.

A National Very Special Arts Festival is held annually as a culmination of all the programs from different states. These National Festivals are intended as a celebration of the arts by handicapped persons. At the Festivals are a variety of presentations and performances by handicapped persons in such areas as drama, dance and music. The 1984 National VSAF will be held in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the NCAH, May 23 - 26. The event will bring together both disabled and nondisabled children and

youth to share their accomplishments in the arts. Distinguished artists and educators from the U.S. and abroad will join the children in workshops, demonstrations and exhibitions. There will be performances featuring students from two current NCAH projects. These projects are collaborations with the Young Playwrights Festival and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

The goals published by the NCAH for the 1984 National VSAF are as follows: to provide national recognition of the skills and abilities of children and youth with handicapping conditions; to emphasize the purpose of the VSAF program, which is to demonstrate the impact of the arts on enhancing the basic learning skills of handicapped students; to provide recognition for the local VSAF programs, as well as stimulate interest in program expansion; reinforce the national networks of the VSAF programs; to provide a unique opportunity for handicapped persons to share with hundreds of their peers in a variety of arts experiences; to provide honor to the individuals and groups selected to participate ; to create opportunities for fund raising and awareness activities as well as an opportunity for students to meet their Congressional Representatives.

In section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Congress mandates that people with handicapping conditions can no longer be denied access to any programs and facilities that receive Federal funds. The NCAH has supported Federally funded arts programs which are endeavoring to achieve the aim of this law.

In 1983,consideration of the existing programs as being capable of ensuring that disabled people receive good quality art experiences, led the NCAH to the Artists in Education (AIE) program of the National endowment of the Arts(NEA). Funds from the NCAH's private endowment and the NEA services

to the field, were allocated for the NCAH to design models for training Artists in Education so that they would more meaningfully reach disabled populations within their residencies.

The NCAH distributed a nationwide needs assessment to determine the extent to which disabled students were already receiving art experiences through the AIE program. The assessment revealed that although Artists in Education were working in disabled constituents, most of them had no specific training in this work.

Based on the results of the AIE needs assessment, the NCAH initiated a special task force in April 1983 at Wright State Universit, Dayton, Ohio. At the meeting there were AIE administrators from arts councils in the Midwestern United States,as well as visual and performing artists selected from five EIA programs. Experts in the field of arts and disabilities worked with the artists on adaptive art techniques and provided some background on disabilities. Arts council administrators brainstormed ideas and made recommendations for integrating disabled persons into the AIE in a productive way.

A comprehensive report was made from the work of the Task Force, with the purpose of encouraging arts councils and AIE artists to increase the efficiency of their programs for the disabled. The report contains a section for arts council administrators and AEI co-ordinators, with recommendations to evaluate and fully utilize the particular needs of their program. There is a training model section which was utilized at the Special Task Force meeting at Wright State University, intended for Artists in Education.

The NCAH's goals are three fold. Firstly, to provide disabled students'

programs nationwide, with quality arts experiences. (A follow up survey will be held in late 1984 following the recommendations) Secondly, to develop reccomendations with AIE administrators that will allow disabled students to actively participate in AIE programs, including strategies and resourses for training AEI artists to work with the disabled. Thirdly, to provide AEI artists with methods in music, drama, and dance, to better serve disabled students.

The NCAH is committed to expanding opportunities for all handicapped individuals to learn about the arts through their own involvement in the arts. Their commitment is based on their strong beliefs that art, music, dance, drama and other art forms are powerful vehicles through which people with emotional and physically handicapping conditions can enrich and enhance learning in their lives. Also, that they acknowledge the work of educational researchers and artists, that have noted the important role that art can play in the social , emotional, physical and mental development of disabled persons.

In just over a decade attitudes towards the education of the handicapped have changed greatly. Not only have people become more aware of the rights of handicapped people as individuals with needs for personal, educational fulfillment and self expression, but the passing of legislation (PL 94 142 and the Rehabilitation Act, section 504, 1973) has meant that such ideals are now being implemented and brought into reality.

Research has produced concrete evidence which show that art experiences can be beneficial to disabled people at a level beyond that of being just an enjoyable 'pass time'. That through involvement and participation in visual and performance arts' activities, the handicapped can often find a means of expression which enables them to become more effectual, positive individuals, rather than assume a once typical passive role.

The research projects mentioned in this report show concrete evidence that art experiences in the form of carefully designed art programs can be beneficial to the handicapped in fulfilling educational needs and which facilitate learning that may not be so easily acquired through traditional methods of instruction. According to De Chiara (1982) the concept of body image can be developed through art experiences; good body image being a basis for acquiring further academic concepts. Spatial concepts learned through the art activities designed by Silver and Levin (1979) were found to be associated with those required for mathematics and reading. The program, RITA (Corwin 1978) was originally designed for high school students with reading ages two grades below level, to increase their reading acheivement. A year later a curriculum guide for RITA was published.

Apart from the direct educational needs that can be met with specifically designed art programs, there are additional benefits that have been mentioned by researchers, such as, an improved self concept that can increase motivation in other academic subjects. Also, the use of art as a mainstreaming activity, in which handicapped and nonhandicapped students can each contribute in a combined project at their own level.

At the present time there are very few art programs being used as alternative educational methods specifically for the handicapped. The reason for this seems to be,firstly, a lack of knowledge and therefore confidence in the area of art and the handicapped. Secondly, a need for more training of art specialists and special education teachers in this area. The NCAH is the organization that is doing the most to gather research information in this area, increase public awareness at a nationwide level as well as to help and co-ordinate art programs.

Methods and Procedures.

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the special education teachers who visited the 1983 'Rainbow Factory' VSAF in Anchorage towards the arts activities presented at the festival, how they considered them in terms of value as ongoing activities for their students and to get some indication of their feelings towards the general aims and principles behind the NCAH.

A discussion was held with Goodwin Trent of the Anchorage Arts Council who is the Statewide Coordinator of the VSAF in Alaska. Three ares of interest were identified for which responses from special education teachers who visited the 1983 'Rainbow Factory' would be of value in developing the direction of future festivals and arts programs for the handicapped. Firstly, to determin whether the special education teachers saw the Festival as something that could be part of an ongoing program of activities or as an isolated event. Also, whether the teachers considered the arts workshops not only as festival events but as presenting activities which might satistfy certain educational needs that could be developed in the classroom. Secondly, to gain feedback on the interest of the special education teachers in having artists do workshops with their students in school and the provision of workshops and courses for teachers in arts and the handicapped. Thirdly, to gain responses from teachers towards the ideals and philosophy behind the activities of the NCAH.

A questionaire was used to gather information from the special education teachers. In order to develop the questionaire information on the artists and workshops at the Festival was obtained from the Anchorage Arts Council, who are agents for the VSAF in Alaska. The five general aims of special education teachers identified by Goebel and Gowland (1982) as being most

consistantly mentioned with regard to student progress, were included in questions associated with the workshops presented at the Festival. The questions were not related to specific workshops because of the time delay since the Festival. Several statements of the philosophy behind the NCAH were used to compile the last section of the questionaire. The reference used for this was the NCAH report,'Arts in Education and Disabled Constituents'(1983 p.4).

The questionaire was compiled and presented to Margaret Lowe, Principal of Rigel Special Services School for handicapped children, who is also a member of the 'Rainbow Factory' Steering Committee, for advice on obtaining demographic information as well as the relevance of the questionaire for special education teachers in Anchorage. A true pilot study was not carried out,but the questionaire was given to two special education teachers who visited the 1983 'Rainbow Factory' for their responses to it's contents, after which a few minor alterations were made.

The questionaire consisted mainly of statements to be responded to on a Lickert scale (Appendix A). There were some yes/no questions with room for comments. Teachers were asked to indicate the age range and type of handicap of the students they accompanied. It was likely that the individual student groups would often be of mixed ages and handicaps, however, it was felt that this information would be of interest.

The population in this study consisted of the special education teachers who visited the 1983 'Rainbow Factory'. A list of the teachers that attended the Festival was obtained through Communication Services. Since it was ten months after the event, schools were called to see if teachers were still there. Several teachers were located at different schools. Of the 64 teachers listed, 61 were still teaching in the School District. Questionaires were sent through the Internal School Mailing System

to the 61 teachers at 22 different elementary schools, one junior high and one preschool for children with handicaps. It is possible that since there was a time delay between the Festival and the questionaire that some teachers were detered from answering it, however, the nature of the required responses were for attitudes that should be long lasting. The questionaire was compiled in a way that teachers and schools could remain anonymous. A combined thank you and reminder letter was sent to all teachers one week after the questionaire.

Results.

Out of the 61 questionaires sent, 42 were returned completed. Two were returned uncompleted from teachers who had not infact been able to attend the 'Rainbow Factory' as planned. This therefore, reduced the total number of possible completed returned questionaires to 59, bringing the percentage of returned completed questionaires to 71%.

Table 1. indicates the workshops attended by different groups; the categories of special education students that attended and the total age range of the students. Since most of the groups consisted of a variety of handicaps and a wide range in age of students. the teachers' responses were analysed as a whole group.

Table 1.

Q.# 1. Questionaire responses came from special education teachers who attended the following workshops:
Animal Magic; Drama; Dance; Shadow land; Sensory Center; Jungle Drums.

Q.# 2. Questionaires were returned from special education teachers attending the 1983 'Rainbow Factory' with the following categories of special education students:
Deaf; Hearing impaired; Vision impaired; Orthopedically handicapped; Multihandicapped; Autisic; Learning disabled (LD); Emotionally disturbed (ED); Mentally retarded (MR); Language delayed.

Q.# 3. Questionaires were returned from teachers attending the'Rainbow Factory' with children from the age range, 3 - 14 years.

Table 2. shows the results of questions related specifically to the events at the 1983 'Rainbow Factory'. Responses to questions 4 - 9 indicate the mode of special teachers' opinion as being,that the art activities presented in the workshops did present opportunities to include the five general aims of special education teachers identified by Goebel and Gowland (1982), with regard to student progress. Although the mean scores for questions 4, 6, 7 and 9, were less than 4.0 the modes indicated that the substantial majority

of teachers agreed with the statements. Responses indicated strong agreement to questions 5 and 8, refering to the art activities providing opportunities for students to improve listening skills and develop a positive self image. The latter particularly substanciated what has been said by Wood (1977), Silver et al. (1977) and Gister (1981), that art activities help develop a positive self image, which in itself can be a valuable motivating force for other educational activities.

Table 2.

Questionaire responses relating specifically to the 1983'Rainbow Factory' in Anchorage.

Q.#		SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN *
4.	A pre festival orientation is important.	2	21	6	9	1	3.358
5.	Opportunity- develop positive self image.	13	19	8	1	0	4.073
6.	Opportunity- increase organizational skills.	1	20	9	11	0	3.487
7.	Opportunity- follow a sequence of instruction.	3	31	4	2	0	3.875
8.	Opportunity- for improving listening skills.	12	28	0	1	0	4.390
9.	Activities-poss. use to remediate indiv. deficit.	2	20	13	5	0	3.475
10.	Valuable for use in student individual program/	6	21	10	4	0	3.707
			YES	NO			
15.	Any untypical positive behavior from students?		16	20			
16.	Features that could be improved?(Comments-appen.B)		17	13			
17.	The artists worked well with the students.		39	0			
		SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN
19.	Performances in the gymnasium were beneficial.	10	20	7	1	0	4.184

* For computation of the mean,responses were converted to numeric values: SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, SD=1.

It is interesting to note that the teachers were able to respond so positively to the workshops in terms of the five special education teachers' aims mentioned, even though the workshops had not been specifically designed to meet these requirements. This appears to reflect a great deal of potential in the direction of art activities being designed specifically to improve certain special education requirements.

The mean score for question 10 was 3.707, however, the mode indicated that half of the teachers saw activities valuable for use in a teacher's individual program

Comments from teachers Appendix B, Q.15) on any positive behavior shown by students that was untypical at the Festival, often refered to the students as being unusually responsive. For example one teacher commented, "A student who is normally not aware of what others may be doing - responded very appropriately to creative drama."

Responses to question 19 showed an agreement that teachers felt the ongoing performances from visual and performance artists at the Festival were beneficial to the students.

In answer to question 16 on comments for improvement that could be made to the'Rainbow Factory', many of the comments refered to organization and physical layout. Much of this was due to the large numbers of students which were attending, the limited number of days for the Festival and the narrow passageways of the building which was being used for the event. Also, the fact that there was only one elevator and often several people at a time in wheel chairs, made travelling within the building sometimes slow.

Three comments also in response to question 16 (Appendix B) refered to the inclusion of some nonhandicapped students at the Festival. One of these stated that, "Nonhandicapped students should be included as peer models." This attitude is somewhat reflected in the strong agreement to questions 20 and 26, both of which refer to art activities with handicapped and nonhandicapped students together.

Although the mean score for question4, on the need for a pre-festival orientation was less than 4.0. the mode indicated that most teachers would

value an orientation. This, and comments in Appendix B, question 16, reflect this feeling.

The responses on Table 3 all indicate a positive reaction to visual and performance arts activities beyond those of the Festival, as well as a desire to become more familiar with arts activities for the handicapped. There is a strong disagreement that art activities should only be taught by art specialists. This substantiates the responses to the other questions on this table. It also possibly indicates that special educators realize that their students require art activities more often than the art specialist can provide with a limited number of visits.

Table 3.

Questionaire responses relating to follow up activites, visiting artists and workshops.

Q.#		SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN
11.	Visit from artist for workshop val. - sp. ed.	18	15	6	2	0	4.195
12.	If artist visited last yr.- want one this yr.?		YES 4		NO 2		
13.	Comments of above question, see appendix B						
14.	Further comments, see appendix B.						
18.	Done any similar or follow up activites since?		YES 22		NO 16		
		SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN
20.	Visit from artist for sp. ed. & reg. ed. tog.	20	13	3	4	0	4.256
21.	Mini wk. shops for sp. ed. teachers valuable.	11	18	11	0	0	4.0
22.	University courses on art as alternative.	14	21	6	0	0	4.195
23.	Art activities in sp. ed. - art specialist.	0	0	1	21	19	1.6

More than half of the teachers reported doing follow up activities since the Festival. Most of the teachers who added comments, refered to activities in drama which they had done. (Appendix B,question 18)

Teachers showed a strong agreement towards having visual and performing artists to do workshops in their schools for both their special education students as well as a mainstreaming activity. In both cases the mode scores

indicated that most of the teachers were strongly in agreement to these questions. The mean scores for questions 21 and 22 showed that teachers agreed mini workshops and university courses would be valuable for special education teachers.

Table 4.

Questionaire responses to statements of philosophy behind the NCAH.

Q.#		SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN
24.	Arts - improve cognitive & aesthetic skills.	12	27	1	0	0	4.275
25.	Arts - alternative learning approaches.	13	23	3	1	0	4.2
26.	Arts - potential vehicle for integration.	18	23	0	0	0	4.439
27.	Arts - communication - sensory impairment.	19	20	0	0	0	4.487
28.	Creative arts - positive self image/confidence.	18	22	0	0	0	4.45
29.	Art work - motivation to channel- ed. needs.	17	20	2	0	0	4.459
30.	Arts - help need for personal expression.	15	25	1	0	0	4.268
31.	Art ed. - help use leisure time effectively.	16	21	3	1	0	4.341
32.	The arts need the handicapped.	13	22	5	0	0	4.2

Responses to the general philosophies behind the NCAH on Table 4 indicate that the special education teachers were in definate agreement with all of these statements. The two scores which were the highest were to question 27 and 29. "The arts can be a means of communication and stimulating experiences for children with sensory impairments." which was mentioned by Levin and Silver (1977 and 1979) and Brubeck (1981) and "Art work can create motivation in students which may be channelled into other educational needs." which was refered to by Wood (1977) and Steinhaussen(1970).

Summary and Conclusions.

The NCAH founded in 1974, is working on a nationwide project to organize and develop arts for the disabled. The VSAF, which is part of this NCAH project, is intended to provide opportunities for the handicapped to take part in visual and performance arts workshops in schools and communities and give them a chance to demonstrate their abilities. It is also intended that these Very Special Arts Festivals demonstrate the impact of the arts in developing artistic responsiveness and increasing general learning achievement among handicapped students, as well as providing integration into the mainstream of education and cultural activities.

In alaska a VSAF has been held annually in Anchorage since 1978. In 1983 the Festival also travelled to Fairbanks, Juneau and Kenai. For this study, certain areas of interest were identified for which the responses of special education teachers who visited the 1983 VSAF, 'Rainbow Factory', would help the development of future festivals and art programs for the handicapped in Alaska. A questionaire was compiled and sent to the 61 special education teachers who attended the Festival. Responses were received from 42 teachers of children between the ages of 3 - 14 years and all areas of special education. The responses indicated that the teachers did see the arts workshop activities as being educationally beneficial to their students, as well as improving student self concept and in many cases encouraging students to be more responsive. There was strong agreement for having artists carry out workshops with students in schools and also opportunities for teachers to do workshops or courses related to arts and the handicapped. The majority of teachers responded in agreement to the philosophies behind the NCAH.

The 'Rainbow Factory' is providing special education students in Anchorage

with a valuable opportunity to experience workshops in the visual and performing arts, together with the ongoing cultural activities which take place throughout the Festival. It is possible that if the length of the Festival was extended, groups would have the opportunity to attend more workshops and be smaller in size. This may also ease any problem of congestion in the building.

The research studies refered to in this study indicate that specially designed art programs can be beneficial to special education students,in providing experiences which allow them to be more expressive, self confident and sometimes in providing an alternative channel for learning.

The results of the questionaire imply that the special education teachers would like guidance in developing arts activities with their students, such as workshops with artists to share ideas and experiences and courses for credit in the arts and the handicapped. With artists and special educators having the opportunity to exchange ideas, the potential of arts programs will be better realized. Visiting artists to do workshops with special education students, or mainstreaming activities with handicapped and nonhandicapped students together, would be very valuable.

The opportunity for teachers to work with artists at workshops during the year and also a pre-festival orientation., would allow teachers to better prepare their students for the Festival as well as enable them to extend and develop appropriate arts activities with their students throughout the year.

Appendix A.

THE RAINBOW FACTORY / ARTS AND THE HANDICAPPED.

The Very Special Arts Festival called the Rainbow Factory, is part of a nationwide program sponsored by the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped.

This questionaire is part of a graduate research project made in conjunction with the Rainbow Factory.

As a teacher who visited the 1983 Rainbow Factory, I would appreciate your responses on this questionaire. I know this is a very busy time of year, but the information from this questionaire will help the planning of future festivals and ongoing programs of arts for the handicapped.

I would be grateful if you could complete and return the questionaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided, by Wednesday 14th. March.

Thank you for participating,

Ann Gray.

1. Please check below the workshops that you visited at the Rainbow Factory.

☐ ANIMAL MAGIC - printmaking and creating large Alaskan animals.

☐ DRAMA - creating stories to act and mime.

☐ DANCE - with members of the Alaska Contemporary Dance Company.

☐ SHADOW LAND - learning about shadows and participating in a shadow drama.

☐ SENSORY CENTER - boxes that emmitted sound in response to movement, touch and breath.

☐ JUNGLE DRUMS - a music workshop with many different kinds of drums.

2. What kind of Special Ed. Children did you take to the Rainbow Factory?

☐ Deaf	☐ Orthopedically handicapped	☐ L.D.
☐ Hearing Impaired	☐ Multihandicapped	☐ E.D.
☐ Vision Impaired	☐ Autistic	☐ M.R.
☐ Other....		

3. What was the age range of the children you took to the Rainbow Factory?

.....years.

In the following questions please circle the abbreviations that most closely indicate your opinion.

SA	A	U	D	SD
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree

4. A pre Festival orientation for teachers at the Rainbow Factory is important.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. The arts activities I attended provided opportunity for the students to develop a positive self image.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. The arts activities I attended provided opportunity for increasing a student's organizational skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD

7. The arts activities I attended provided opportunity for students to increase their ability to follow a sequence of instruction.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. The arts Activities I attended provided students with opportunities for improving listening skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9. In the workshops I attended I saw activities which could be used to remediate individual deficits of my students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. I would consider some of the activities I saw at the Rainbow Factory valuable for use in a student's individual program.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11. A visit from a performing or visual artist to do a workshop with my Special Ed. students, would be a valuable part of their educational program	SA	A	U	D	SD

12. If you had a visiting artist in your class last year, would you like to have one this year? YES ☐ NO ☐

13. If not, please comment.

14. If yes, what were the benefits?

15. During the workshops did any of your students show any positive behavior which they do not normally display? YES ☐ NO ☐

Comments.

16. Were there any features of the Rainbow Factory that could be improved in order for your children to enjoy it more? YES ☐ NO ☐

Comments.

17. Did you feel that the artists worked well with your children? YES ☐ NO ☐

Comments.

Appendix A.

18. Have you done any similar or follow up activities with your children? YES ☐ NO ☐

Comments.

19.	The performances given in the gymnasium were a benficial part of the Rainbow Factory.	SA	A	U	D	SD
20.	A visit from a performing or visual artist to my school to do a workshop in which both Special Ed. and Regular Ed. students could participate together would be valuable.	SA	A	U	D	SD
21.	I would find the availability of mini workshops for Special Ed. teachers with visual or performing artists valuable.	SA	A	U	D	SD
22.	It is important that universities offer courses on developing the arts as alternative learning approaches in Special Education.	SA	A	U	D	SD
23.	Art activities in Special Education should be presented only by an art education specialist.	SA	A	U	D	SD
24.	Children with disabilities can improve their cognitive affective and aesthetic skills as a result of arts activities.	SA	A	U	D	SD
25.	The arts are alternative learning approaches for children whose disabilities interfere with their adjustment to more traditional classroom situations.	SA	A	U	D	SD
26.	Programs in the arts are potential vehicles for integrating handicapped with nonhandicapped individuals and breaking down barriers of fear and discrimination.	SA	A	U	D	SD
27.	The arts can be a means of communication and of stimulating experiences for children with sensory impairments.	SA	A	U	D	SD
28.	Creative arts can contribite to a positive self-image and a greater confidence in children.	SA	A	U	D	SD
29.	Art work can create motivation in students which may be channelled into other educational needs.	SA	A	U	D	SD
30.	The arts help to meet the need for personal expression that is experienced by all individuals.	SA	A	U	D	SD
31.	Art education can be paramount in helping handicapped individuals to use leisure time effectively and to avoid loneliness and isloation.	SA	A	U	D	SD
32.	The handicapped bring a special point of veiw and perspective to the arts. The arts need the handicapped.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Appendix B,

Question 11.

A visit from a performing or visual artist to do a workshop with my special Ed. students, would be a valuable part of their educational program.

Comment.

* "That would be wonderful, but..age and language appropriate though. Needs to be a 'hands ' on of doing something - less emphasis on language explanations and more on thinking and doing.
* "Only if they could gear their program to age appropriate,not mental appropriate."

Question 15.

During the workshops did any of your students show any positive behavior which they do not normally display?

Comments...

* "One of my students really enjoyed the 'drums' workshop and did very well at it. "
* "A student who is normally not aware of what others may be doing - responded very appropriately to creative drama."
* "One student responded verbally to an unfamiliar adult for the first time."
* "Lengthening of attention span. "
* "My shy students really opened up in the 'Jungle drums'. Also, it was fun to see them act out the drama parts."
* "Excitement about dance which I had not been able to bring about."
* Dance and square dance I saw students cooperating more with each other."
* "Well prepared and moved right along so no slack time for kids to get into trouble.(Emotionally disturbed group.)

Appendix B.

Question 16.

Were there any features of the 'Rainbow Factory' that could be improved in order for your children to enjoy it more?

Comments...

* Orientation for teachers so the kids will have an idea of what to expect."
* "Not really - activities were interesting and organization was good - transactions were fairly smooth."
* "If more detailed explanations were given to the teachers ahead of time we could prepare the students better for the experience at the 'Rainbow Factory'."
* "A great deal of time was spent waiting for Jamie Wyeth to arrive. Efforts were made to entertain students in the interim but for the most part students became restless and bored."
* "Structural organization - layout was confusing and traffic jams were common. Also, nonhandicapped students should be included as peer medels."
* Movement workshops at a simple level (Imitative skills requested of students.)"... (Multihandicapped 5-8 years.)
* "Better scheduling - give the kids a variety of activities - I've seen problems with an overabundance of movement, dance, music, NO art etc. painting and this type of scheduling. I think all classes should get a bit of each. Also - don't segregate the special ed. kids, but a limit of regular ed. kids should be set-say 1 to 1."
* "Yes, orthopedically handicapped kids ought to be scheduled to things they can do more easily."
* "Not so many at once."
* "Think there should be some higher level activities to focus on children who may be E.D. but are not retarded."

Appendix B.

Question 16 comments continued.

* "Work in regular ed. kids instead of making it a retarded function - normalize it."
* "I thought most of the activities were geared for the very young child- need to have more activities thay would interest the older handicapped child."
* "It was poorly organized. At times neither I, nor the presenter knew if we were in the right place. Groups were too large. '
* "More face painters, so they don't have to wait so long."
* "A preview ahead of time so they would know what to expect - sometimes the activity was over with before they realized what was going on."
* "I have orthopedically handicapped students. We did not get the workshops we requested, instead got dance which was not appropriate to many."
* "Oraganization, too many people in halls to get order."
* "Smaller groups."
* "Not enough people painting faces - add some rock and roll music."
* "Maybe fewer activities, with the children allowed to spend more time with the hands-on kinds of activities."

Appendix B.

Question 17.

Did you feel the artists worked well with your children?

Comments....

* "Exceptionally so, they do a great job."
* "Generally very positive and in control of the situation."
* "Worked at all levels and varied activities to keep interested."
* "Very well."
* "Were able to address students at their level and were very motivating, especially the drama and drums."
* "Some excellent. Others afraid to'take charge' and tell us what was expected of us."
* "Most were well prepared patient and enthusiatic - the 3 main ingredients for success."
* "They seened to genuinely care for the children and eager to please them."
* "Yes."

Question 18.

Have you done any similar or follow up activities with your children?

Comments....

* "Stories, creations and mime activities.Shadows- learning about and observing." (Learning disabled.)
* "Some acting out of stories." (Learning disabled, mentally retarded, Language impaired.)
* "Listening songs and games. Wrote story about 'Rainbow Factory'. (Learning disabled, hearing impaired, communication disorder, neurologically impaired.)
* "They enjoyed acting out stories and we continued that last year. (Learning disabled, emotionally disturbed.)

Appendix B.

Question 18 comments continued.

* "Drama activities." (learning disabled.)
* "Dance and printmaking." (Multihandicapped.)
* "Lots of dramatizations." (Learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, multihandicapped.)

Additional comments from the backs of the questionaire.

* "Would like more advance notification of the "Rainbow Factory."
* "It is very difficult to arrange buses etc. when we have such short notice. Maybe special funds could be set aside to have buses bring kids from several schools in one area to the 'Rainbow Factory' so it will be easier to plan."
* "I feel strongly that you need to have activities aimed for the older child's interest. I like the idea of a visiting artist coming to the schools."
* "This is the first year (at this school) that the art teacher has come into my room. I have a SLD class and the kids are mainstreamed for art. BUT I have learned quite a bit about my students by watching them work with the different art materials. The art teacher says she enjoys working with my students. Whenever possible I take my students to the Jnr. theater productions and encourage them to attend the "Dance" series whenever possible."
* "This would be more acurately handled if it were received last year after the event."

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